

Message Text

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ACTION EA-13

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 NSC-10 NSCE-00 EUR-10 L-02 PM-03

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CINCPAC/POLAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 11709

LIMDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, MOPS, VS

SUBJ: CEASEFIRE II TAKES SHAPE IN MR IV

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION AM SAIGON INFO USDAO SAIGON CDRUSSAG NKP RTAFB
JUNE 28 BEING REPEATED FOR YOUR INFO.

QUOTE :

CAN THO 0511

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, MOPS, VS

SUBJECT: CEASEFIRE II TAKES SHAPE IN MR IV

SUMMARY: WITH CEASEFIRE II WELL INTO ITS SECOND WEEK,
THE MILITARY SITUATION IN MR IV IS BECOMING CLEARER.
THE OVERALL LEVEL OF MILITARY CONFLICT HAS DECLINED AND
ONLY CHUONG THIEN CONTINUES TO WITNESS REGULAR AND HEAVY
FIGHTING. THE RVNAF HAS TAKEN UP AN ACTIVE " DEFENSE"
WHILE THROUGH MOST OF THE REGION THE VC/ NVA HAVE ADOPTED
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A SUBSTANTIALLY LOWER PROFILE. SENIOR RVNAF OFFICERS ARE
SUSPICIOUS OF AMERICAN INTENTIONS AND FIELD GRADE OFFICERS
ARE UNWILLING TO ADMIT CEASEFIRE II WILL BRING AN END TO
THE FIGHTING. MOST VIETNAMESE OFFICERS BELIEVE THEY ARE

WITNESSING ONLY A TEMPORARY LULL BEFORE CONFLICT IS RENEWED. ACCORDINGLY THEY ARE MAINTAINING THEIR TROOPS ON COMBAT ALERT AND ARE CONDUCTING A STRONG " SECURITY" PATROLLING. END SUMMARY.

1. THROUGH MOST OF MR IV, THE LEVEL OF MILITARY ACTIVITY HAS FALLEN SINCE CEASEFIRE II. THE DECLINE VARIES FROM PROVINCE TO PROVINCE. THE NORTHERN DELTA PROVINCES, VC MR II, ENJOY THE GREATER RESPITE. TRADITIONALLY CONTESTED AREAS (CHAU DOC, HONG NGU DISTRICT OF KIEN PHONG AND DINH TUONG) HAVE BEEN ESPECIALLY QUIET. THE DECLINE IN DINH TUONG ACTIVITY WHICH BEGAN WITH THE DEPARTURE OF THE 5 TH NVA DIVISION CONTINUED AT A FASTER PACE WITH THE ADVENT OF CEASEFIRE II. MOST INCIDENTS ARE LIGHT ATTACKS BY FIRE AND ARE SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE PROVINCE RATHER THAN BEING CONCENTRATED IN SAM GIANG AND CAI LAY DISTRICTS AS WAS THE CASE IN EARLY JUNE. THE TRI PHAP TRI- BORDER BASE IS THE MOST HEAVILY CONTESTED AREA IN VC MR II. NORTH OF TRI PHAP SINCE MID- MAY ARVN HAS ATTACKED THE 1 A SUPPLY ROUTE WITHOUT HALT TO SLOW VC/ NVA INFILTRATION. JUST PRIOR TO CEASEFIRE II IT MOVED IN STRENGTH INTO THE TRI PHAP BASE AREA AND IS PRESENTLY MAINTAINING A HEAVILY ARMED PRESENCE THERE. KIEN HOA CONTINUES TO SUFFER THE SAME LOW LEVEL OF INCIDENTS WHICH OCCURRED PRIOR TO CEASEFIRE II. THE PROVINCE REPRESENTATIVE ESTIMATES, HOWEVER, THAT ALMOST HALF OF THESE RESULT FROM RVNAF " SECURITY" OPERATIONS.

2. IN VC MR III THE PICTURE IS VARIED. VC/ NVA INCIDENTS IN BA XUYEN, BAC LIEU, PHONG DINH, VINH BINH, VINH LONG, AND AN XUYEN HAS DECREASED CONSIDERABLY. IN VINH LONG DURING THE FIRST DAYS OF THE NEW CEASEFIRE, THE VC D 3 REGIMENT MADE SEVERAL STRONG APPEARANCES AND FLEW FLAGS IN SENSITIVE VUNG LIEM DISTRICT. INCIDENTS IN THE PROVINCE AS A WHOLE ARE DOWN BY ABOUT 25 PER CENT. VINH BINH' S PROVINCE CHIEF PUSHED HIS TROOPS FORWARD IN MID- JUNE FOR SEVERAL DAYS AND DISTRIBUTED CASH REWARDS FOR DEAD VC. CONFIDENTIAL

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HIS PASSION SEEMS TO HAVE CALMED. IN BAC LIEU DURING THE WEEK PRECEEDING THE NEW TRUCE, RVNAF FORCES LAUNCHED LIMITED OFFENSIVES. THESE HAVE TAPERED OFF. IN BATTERED AN XUYEN RVNAF HAS AGGRESSIVELY PATROLLED NEAR AREAS OF PREDOMINATE GOVERNMENT INFLUENCE AND HAVE TAKEN SUBSTANTIAL CASUALTIES IN SO DOING.

3. CHUONG THIEN AND TO A LESSER DEGREE NEIGHBORING AREAS OF KIEN GIANG ARE EXCEPTIONS TO THE OVERALL VC MR III PICTURE. BOTH SIDES ARE CHEATING. THE VC/ NVA HAVE SNATCHED HAMLETS IN CHUONG THIEN' S KIEN HUNG DISTRICT, SHELLED KIEN THIEN DISTRICT TOWN AND PROBED THE VI THANH AREA. THEY HAVE USED THE 1 C SUPPLY ROUTE IN KIEN GIANG

TO INFILTRATE MEN AND MATERIAL TO THE CHUONG THIEN FRONT. THE 16 TH ARVN REGIMENT HAS GRABBED LAND IN VC CONTROLLED AREAS OF LONG MY DISTRICT. IN NORTHERN DUC LONG DISTRICT RANGERS HOLD TERRITORY LOST TO THE VC/ NVA PRIOR TO JANUARY 28, BUT RECAPTURED SHORTLY BEFORE THE NEW PARIS COMMUNIQUE.

4. SEVERAL PATTERNS IN THE MR IV MILITARY SITUATION ARE EMERGING. THE GVN IS CONDUCTING AN AGGRESSIVE " DEFENSE." THE STRATEGY HAS THREE ASPECTS. DIVISION AND PROVINCES ARE LAUNCHING A LARGE NUMBER OF SECURITY OPERATIONS MANY OF WHICH BRUSH DANGEROUSLY CLOSE TO VC/ NVA UNITS. SECOND THE GVN IS HOLDING TERRITORY IT DID NOT OWN ON JANUARY 28. IN THE TRI PHAP JEA AND IN EASTERN AND NORTHERN CHUONG THIEMUN RVNAF IS SQUALTING ON COMMUNIST GROUND. THE VC/ NVA ARE FIGHTING BACK FIERCELY. THIRD RVNAF IS TRYING TO STOP INFILTRATION. ALONG THE PRINCIPAL VC/ NVA SUPPLY ROUTES IN KIEN TUONG AND KIEN GIANG MR IV HAS ORDERED INFILTRATION CUT## IN KIEN GIANG

SINCE CEASEFIRE II HAS INSERTED ADDITIONAL ARVN FORCES TO DO THE JOB. ONLY IN OVERWHELMINGLY GOVERNMENT CONTROLLED AREAS LIKE CHAU DOC HAS RVNAF GIVEN SIGNS OF ACCEPTING THE CEASEFIRE.

5. THE PATTERN OF VC/ NVA ACTIVITY IS SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT. IN GENERAL THEY HAVE ADOPTED A LOWER PROFILE AND ARE ACTING WITH RESTRAINT. THERE ARE MAJOR EXCEPTIONS TO THIS
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RULE. INFILTRATION CONTINUES UNABATED. IN CHUONG THIEN AND BORDER AREAS OF BA XUYEN, THE VC/ NVA HAVE SEIZED TERRITORY AND POPULATION. VC INITIATED TERRORIST INCIDENTS HAVE RISEN SHARPLY AND ARE A GROWING CAUSE OF CONCERN TO MR IV AUTHORITIES.

6. RVNAF' S AGGRESSIVE POSTURE IS SYMTOMATIC OF PERSUASIVE UNEASINESS AND SKEPTICISM WITH WHICH SENIOR IV CORPS OFFICERS REGARD THE NEW AGREEMENT. ARVN GENERALS ARE ONCE AGAIN QUESTIONING AMERICAN MOTIVES. MR IV CHIEF OF STAFF BGEN NGUYEN VAN LAC TOLD US JUNE 23 THAT THE US IS RESTRICTING THE FLOW OF MILITARY SUPPLIES TO MR IV TO SUCH AN EXTENT THAT MR IV COMBAT SUPPLY STOCKS ARE 50 PER CENT BELOW THE LEVEL WHICH OBTAINED AT CEASEFIRE I. LAC LAID THIS STATE OF AFFAIRS AT THE DOOR OF AMERICAN ATTEMPTS TO COERCE THE GVN TO ABIDE BY THE CEASEFIRE. LAC THOUGHT THIS POLICY UNDULY RESTRICTIVE AND DANGEROUS FOR THE EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE OF MR IV MILITARY UNITS. DEPUTY COMMANDING GENERAL BGEN NLPCSN THANH HOANG JUNE 24 ASKED ANOTHER CONSULATE GENERAL OFFICER WHETHER ANY SOUTH VIET-NAMESE PROVINCES, LIKENKQUONG THIEN, HAD BEEN CEDED TO THE COMMUNIST SIDE AT THE RECENTLY CONCLUDED KISSINGER- LE DUC THO

TALKS IN PARIS. HOANG SAID THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD NEVER AGREE TO SUCH A MOVE.

7. PROVINCE REPRESENTATIVES REPORT PROVINCE CHIEFS SHARE IV CORPS' SKEPTICISM AND ARE REACTING TO CEASEFIRE II ALMOST AS IF THE FOUR PARTIES HAD NOT SIGNED A JOINT COMMUNIQUE. COL NGUYEN NGOC DIEP IN BAC LIEU WHEN ASKED WHAT HE THOUGHT OF THE CEASEFIRE REPLIED, " WHAT CEASEFIRE. THE RAINS HAVE SLOWED THE VC." BOTH FIELD GRADE AND GENERAL OFFICERS BELIEVE THE LULL IN VC ACTIVITY IS ONLY TEMPORARY AND WILL HOLD ONLY WHILE THE VC/ NVA RESUPPLY. ALMOST WITHOUT EXCEPTION THEY ESTIMATE THE VC/ NVA WILL LAUNCH NEW ATTACKS EITHER IN AUGUST OR IN A PERIOD IMMEDIATELY PRECEEDING " GENERAL ELECTIONS." UNTIL ARVN' S ATTITUDE CHANGES AND THE VC/ NVA SHOW CLEARER SIGNS OF LIVING BY THE RULES, FIGHTING IN THE MEKONG DELTA WILL CONTINUE.

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UNQUOTE.

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